



WSIPP Current Study Assignments

A. STUDIES DIRECTED BY THE 2003 LEGISLATURE

Prevention Programs

This study of prevention programs for youth will identify the types of programs that work as well as those that do not. The Institute will examine existing research-based evidence to specifically determine which programs have a demonstrated ability to improve outcomes for youth, including improved education outcomes and reduced criminality, substance abuse, teen pregnancy, suicide, and child abuse and neglect. The costs and benefits of state investments in these programs will be estimated. Recommendations for potential state legislation will be developed that encourage local government investment in research-proven prevention and early intervention programs. The final report is due March 1, 2004. Lead Researcher: Steve Aos, (360) 586-2740.

Criminal Sentencing Laws and Prison Capacity

Statewide sentencing guidelines are used by judges in sentencing adult felons. What is the relationship between the state's projected need for additional prison beds and these guidelines? Could the sentencing laws be adjusted to reduce the need for new prison construction, and at the same time, not significantly alter reoffending levels by prisoners released from prison? A preliminary report is due by December 15, 2003, with a final report on March 15, 2004. Lead Researcher: Barney Barnoski, (360) 586-2744.

Juvenile Offender Treatment Programs

Previous Institute research has demonstrated the cost-effectiveness of certain treatment programs for juvenile offenders, however, this cost-effectiveness requires that practitioners adhere to the program elements and pay attention to quality delivery. This project will identify the necessary elements for adherence and outcome standards for programs designed to reduce recidivism of juvenile offenders. A final report is due January 1, 2004. Lead Researcher: Barney Barnoski, (360) 586-2744.

Prison Early Release and Recidivism

The 2003 Legislature changed the law concerning how some state prisoners earn release time due to good behavior, leading to earlier releases. This study will examine whether these changes affect the rate of recidivism. The first phase of the study will collect data on those persons released early and identify a suitable comparison group. A final report is due December 1, 2008. Lead Researcher: Barney Barnoski, (360) 586-2744.

B. CONTINUING ASSIGNMENTS FROM PREVIOUS LEGISLATIVE SESSIONS

Offender Accountability Act

The Legislature directed the Department of Corrections to significantly revise its policies for supervision of offenders in the community. The Institute's evaluation of the Offender Accountability Act's effect on recidivism patterns continues, with a final report due January 1, 2010. Lead Researcher: Steve Aos, (360) 586-2740.

Juvenile Offender Program

The state's Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration has implemented a research-based program for juvenile offenders with co-occurring disorders (Co-Occurring Disorder Pilot Program). The evaluation will continue, with a final report due during the 2004–2005 biennium. Lead Researcher: Barney Barnoski, (360) 586-2744.

Long-Term Outcomes of Public Mental Health System Clients

The 2001 Legislature directed the Institute to study individuals served by the public mental health system and examine changes in outcomes for these individuals, including services received, employment, education, housing stability, criminal justice involvement, and level of services. Outcomes will be measured over a two-, five-, and ten-year period. Lead Researcher: Steve Lerch, (360) 586-2767.

Alternative Routes to Teacher Certification (K-12)

In 2001, the Legislature created three alternative routes to certification for prospective teachers in Washington and provided funding to implement the routes. The study evaluates whether the programs meet legislative objectives. Lead Researcher: Marna Miller, (360) 586-2745.

Mentally Ill Offenders

In 1998 and 1999, the Legislature significantly revised public safety and treatment policies regarding mentally ill offenders. The first reform bill (2SSB 6214) expanded treatment under criminal and civil laws to misdemeanor defendants determined to be incompetent to stand trial and a threat to public safety. The second bill (SSB 5011) established a release planning process and community case management services for dangerous mentally ill offenders nearing prison release. The Institute is evaluating whether each of these major reforms result in any changes in criminal recidivism patterns.

C. STUDIES DIRECTED BY THE INSTITUTE BOARD

Four-year College Planning and High-Demand Employment

In the area of higher education, what labor market data can be used to plan for and allocate high-demand enrollments in Washington's four-year higher education system? What information does the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges use, as well as the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board? What about information used by other states? Additionally, is there capacity at private institutions to educate people in high-demand fields, and are there ways that the state could partner with these institutions to cost-effectively educate a greater number of people in these fields? Lead Researcher: Annie Pennucci, (360) 586-3952.

Criteria for Prioritizing Tax Exemptions

This study will have three main components: 1) a literature review of research on the economic impacts of state tax exemptions, summarizing the results, and identifying conclusions that are (or are not) relevant given Washington's unique tax system; 2) developing a set of criteria to evaluate and prioritize tax exemption proposals, based on research and state policy goals; and 3) using Department of Revenue and Employment Security Department data to create hypothetical "representative" businesses to examine the impact of tax exemption proposals across industries and under various scenarios. Lead Researcher: Steve Lerch, (360) 586-2767.

Subsidized Child Care Copayments and Subsidies

How much can the state save by increasing the amount low-income parents contribute to the cost of child care (the copayment)? If parents leave the subsidy program because of increased copayments, are the state's savings offset by additional spending on welfare? How is access to the child care market affected by changes in the amount the state pays child care providers (the subsidy rate)? Lead Researcher: Jim Mayfield, (360) 586-2783.

Bilingual Education

Conduct a meta-analysis of research on the outcomes of various approaches to teaching non-native English speaking students (e.g. English immersion vs. bilingual education) including variation in durations. Lead Researcher: Annie Pennucci, (360) 586-3952.